6:Spate N-4 (no date)1954 AWI India
Andamans A22

mariners from massacre. Despite efforts at conciliation there was violence on both sides; attempts were made indeed to settle some of the more friendly groups in an 'Andamans Home' as fishers of trepang (sea-slug) and collectors of edible bird-nests, both for the Chinese market. But the only result was to civilise them out of existence, largely by venereal disease.[52] The Andamanese are—perhaps one should say were—Negritos, and as they represented perhaps the nearest approach to a 'pure primitive' society, both ethnically and culturally, these hunters and gatherers have attracted anthropological attention out of proportion to their numbers.[53]

Transportation of convicts to the Andamans began after the Mutiny. Latterly there was a change of emphasis, hopeless criminals being re-transported to India and the settlement becoming in effect an open prison for young men condemned to life sentences for more or less excusable homicide. After a few months in jail convicts were allowed to become wage-earning employees of Government, to wear ordinary dress, and to marry or bring out their wives. These changes were reflected in the sex composition of the population: 15,158 males to 2980 females in 1901, 14,872 to 6444 in 1941. The cultural landscape also changed: "Everywhere the ephemeral huts of former times are giving way to well-constructed two-storeyed houses of sawn timber and iron roofs," and a good deal of reclamation of malarial swamp took place around Port Blair. The communal composition of the population was an odd reflection of social conditions: in 1941 Muslims were about a third, largely Moplahs from Madras deported after their 1921 rebellion; Sikhs were 3·5% against an All-India total of 1·5%, Buddhists—i.e. Burmese—over 13%. This corresponds to the prevalence of dacoity in Burma and to the Sikh *penchant* for "liquor, love, and fights".

Practically all the economic development is in the Settlement of Port Blair, an area of about 500 sq mls in the S of South Andaman; here is 90% of the population, the remainder being in forest camps. About 75,000 ac. are more or less cleared, of which about 10–15,000 are cultivated and as much grazing land. Paddy and coconuts each account for about a third of the cultivation, and there are (or were) struggling plantations of rubber and coffee, negligible in area.

The war and the Japanese occupation saw a fall in population to about 16,000, and on re-occupation the penal settlement was formally abolished. From time to time schemes of Anglo-Indian agricultural settlement have been mooted, and in March 1948 a batch of 132 families displaced from E Bengal arrived. It may be noted that some Burmese politicians periodi-

[52] 1931 Census Vol. II (Andamans and Nicobars), 11–23.

[53] The classic treatments are those of Sir Richard Temple in the 1901 Census and of A. R. Brown in *The Andaman Islanders* (1922). There is unfortunately little geography in the latter book; what there is is largely summed up in L. Garrard's 'sociograph' in *Studies in Regional Consciousness and Environment* (ed. I. C. Peate, 1930), 82.